

MINUTES
Quality Assurance Advisory Group
Monday, September 26th, 2005, 2:30 – 5:00 PM
Snow King, Summit One Room
Jackson Hole, WY

Attendance: Terry Schertz, Natalie Latysh, Bob Brunette, Chris Lehmann, Jane Rothert, Greg Wetherbee

1. Review/Approval of Minutes from April 2005 Meeting

Minutes from the April 2005 QAAG meeting were approved.

2. Future Meeting Time/Location

It's been difficult for the QAAG to meet at the fall NADP meeting, given an already packed week of committee meetings. The consensus of the group was that the QAAG should have one formal meeting per year at the spring Interim Subcommittee Meeting. The plan will be to meet the evening of the first meeting day, depending on meeting location and travel schedules. The QAAG will have an informal meeting (ex: at lunch) during the NADP Fall Technical Committee Meeting.

3. Discussion: NADP Data Quality Objectives

Greg will give a presentation on NADP DQOs in NOS. (See attachment to NOS minutes.)

4. 2006 HAL & CAL Reviews

The group discussed the purpose of laboratory reviews and their history. (Those outside the NADP may not understand how the NADP is structured and why certain procedures are used.) Greg Wetherbee volunteered to participate in both the 2006 HAL & CAL reviews. Four other participants are needed.

5. USGS External Quality Assurance Project Discussion

Greg and Natalie led a discussion on the pilot study for MDN blind audit samples. Six samples were sent out with laboratory-created precipitation chart. To date, four of the six samples have been submitted to the HAL. Data will be reviewed by USGS to ensure that HAL blind audit data are not reported as real MDN samples.

The participation rate for field audit (NTN) and system blank (MDN) samples has been less than ideal. The USGS allocates a reasonable amount of resources to these programs that are wasted if samples are not submitted in a timely manner. It was suggested that the site survey team remind site operators of the importance of submitting field audit/system blank samples. The USGS will provide a spreadsheet to ATS indicating which samples have not been submitted.

6. MDLs for MeHg

This issue will be discussed in DMAS as it relates to the reporting of methyl mercury data.

7. Mercury Reanalysis Samples

The HAL will perform a pilot study to reanalyze MDN samples. Samples will be digested in the sample bottle, and not decanted after digestion as normally done. (The sample will be stored with oxidized mercury, and should be more stable.) One of every 100 samples will be pulled (i.e., one per analytical batch) and reanalyzed the following week. This will be a random reanalysis, and performed after digestion and oxidation. Samples selected will be volume limited. Select samples will be stored for longer periods to evaluate sample shelf life. The HAL will track the variation in concentrations over a one year period.

The consensus of the group was that a sample archive program is not needed for the HAL, and may not be feasible. There have been little or no requests to perform additional analyses on MDN archive samples, and there are questions regarding the usability of such samples post-digestion.